

EVER PERSUADING MARITAL BLISS IN THE NOVELS OF R. K. NARAYAN

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ABSTRACT

“God used beautiful mathematics in creating the world”

by Paul Dirac

God has created gen male and female genders for the noble cause of progeny through which harmonious society, happy and peaceful life is achieved for human existence. Each gender Possess a few intrinsic properties and abilities. These have been taken as the yardstick for the division of labour with interdependency among family members so that the closeness of family bonding will be strengthened and also carried over to the next generation. This helps an individual to groom with warm feelings. In due course of time trivial human thinking has defused the tranquility of family circuits. This deceives younger generation either to adopt nuclear family system or live- in relationships. The aim of this paper is to turn the focus of younger generation towards Indian Culture and its ever charming marital affinities. R. K. Narayan one of the laureates of Indian writing in English has portrayed everlasting family units and their priorities in the society so elegantly in his novels. His humorous way of narration appeals every one. It is high time to look back the messages conveyed by him to safeguard Indian Culture which has been with standing threats globally.

KEYWORDS: Ever Persuading Marital Bliss in the Novels, Human Existence, Yardstick, Labour

INTRODUCTION

Lord Macaulay addressed in British Parliament (February 2, 1835) that the only way to hit or capture India was to divert their education system by enforcing the English Language as superior and influence their Culture with Western Culture. But Indians took this opportunity as a blessing in disguise and equipped themselves with proficiency in the English Language and propagated Indian Culture through Indian Writings in English. The vision of saints like Swami Vivekananda, Ramanamarshi, Aurobindo induced the taste of Indian Dharma , Philosophy and Spirituality to westerners. A few disciples like Margeret Elizabeth (sister Nivedita), Mirra Alfassa (Annai), Paul Brunton.... surrendered themselves for the service of Indian Spirituality. Indian Writers like R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao, Rabindranth Tagore..., through their novels enlightened the glory of Indian Culture and its grandeur to the world. As the saying goes

He, indeed, is without sacrifice who has got no wife, it is again adds, “He himself is a half man, the second half is wife”.

(Taittiriya Brahman 2.2.2.6)

“Dharmecha, Arthecha and Kamecha nathi charami” is the sloka the bride groom says and takes up the everlasting bond of wed-lock. This is an invincible association of two halves the husband and the wife. This union is a

perception and pleasure. India is a holy land where marriage ceremonies are treated as supreme and strictly governed by the elders of family. It is also an unwritten law which is respected and abided by every citizen of India. Vedic dharma has divided the life span of an individual into four stages each for a period of 25 years. They are Brahmacharya, Gruhastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. Among the four Gruhastha Ashrama Dharma plays a major role in the lives of people. R. K. Narayan who is the staunch follower of Hindu Culture depicts an Indian house holder in his novel "Grandmother's Tale".

Grandmother's Tale

In India marriage means not only the union of a couple but it is also the confluence of two families. Elders fix up an auspicious date and time so that blessings of God is showered upon them and they lead happy and prosperous life till end. At the auspicious hour, amidst the chanting of priests mantras Viswa approaches Bala who is sitting on her father's lap and ties the yellow thread around her neck and then they become husband and wife. To systematize biological and psychological intuitions our fore fathers brought the concept of Marriage into existence. Marriage in life is a sacrament and indissoluble bond which also gives satisfaction to psychological and physiological needs. Ultimately reinforcement of all these strong rules will bring up an individual with refined behavior.

"Marriage is a sacrament in India. It is not an agreement that can be put to an end at will. According to the Apastamba Dharma Sutra, marriage gives capacity to perform religious rites to a man because an unmarried person is incomplete."¹

India is a land where the divine power Sakthi has come down on earth as a human being and faced numerous struggles. This supramental power is an inspiration to the Indian wives. As R.K.Narayan belongs to holy soil of India, he portrays Bala as the embodiment of Sati Savitri who fights Yama for the life of her husband Satyavan.

"Let fate do with me what she will or can;

I am stronger than death and greater than any fate:

My love shall outlast the world, doom falls from me,

Helpless against my immortality."²

The sudden absconding of Viswa from Agraharam brings a change in life of Bala. The villagers gossip that Bala is a widow and criticize her for entering the temple as there was a superstition that widows should be prohibited from temple premises. This turns her face red and she flushes out like a storm and says

"You people think I am a widow? I am not. He is alive like you. I'll not rest until I come back with him some day and shame you all". She threw a word of cheer to her mother and flounced out of house"³

Bala presses pinch of vermilion on her forehead and prostrates at her mother-in-law's feet and leaves house in search of Viswa. R.K.Narayan's true love of Hindu Dharma pictures Bala as an incarnation of Sati Savitri. Zeal and strong determination clutch Bala and prompts her to take up the arduous journey to Pune in search of her husband. It is not only the power of Bala but also the acceleration and vigour of Indian wedding oath. Indian women are the persistents of vedic marriage philosophy. They devote their lives whole heartedly to their husbands and family. Absence of husband deems her life null and void. It spreads vacuum in their lives. So Bala is ready to face all kinds of hardships to prove herself and take top notch position in the family. R.K.Narayan portrays Bala as the personification of Adi Sakthi. Her dauntless journey traces Viswa, where he is working as an assistant to a gem trader. The Vedas say that the integrity

of a husband and a wife is as such **“Her bones become identified with his bones, flesh with flesh, skin with skin”**. Highly potent and hallowed marriages vows symbolizes by three knots ensures that she finds Viswa. Iron-willed Bala sketches a plan and waits for an opportunity to speak to him. On her awaited moment she approaches Viswa and reveals the truth that she is his wife and emphasizes that they must go back to Agraharam. With domineering emotional touch Bala goes to Agraharam with Viswa and proves herself that she is not a widow.

I’ve given you all the time... years and years. The trouble and risk I have undergone to search you out, God alone is our witness. I am not going to allow it go to waste. I am taking you back even if you kill me. I have set the date of our departure. ⁴

R. K. Narayan’s vision of Hindu dharma pictures Bala oppressive as well as submissive. Hindu dharma does not allow male to be disloyal and dishonest to overpower the wife. God showers blessings up on people who are righteous and committed to each other, and in equal partnership without valuing one gender higher than the other. This is the essence of Indian Culture. Adventurous Bala is not known to Agraharam. She becomes submissive obedient wife after attaining her goal. R.K.Narayan has shown true feminism in through the character of Bala and vedic philosophy detached attachment with selfless service.

Dominating, devious and aggressive till she attained her object. Now she was docile and never spoken to her husband in the presence of others. Her tone was gentle and subdued. It was a transformation”. ⁵

This true transformation of Viswa and Bala full fills Gruhastha dharmas which are progeny and performing religious ceremonies. R.K.Narayan justifies Manu’s Law of life in this novel. His narration marvelously shows true feministic aspects such as Indian women know to take bull by horns and as well as head over heels in expressing love.

“The English Teacher”

If one pauses to wonder as to why a man and his wife are considered to be inseparable in India, what factors goad Indian women to embrace to their husbands and what is it the moving power behind the strength that binds a marriage. According to sastric view the spiritual aspect of marriage is so important that husband is said to have received his life partner as chosen by/from God and not as per his own choice. As Vedas quote

(Reg Veds. X85.36)

“I take thy hand for good fortune, that thou mayest attain old age with me as thy husband, the gods have given thee to me that I may be the master of the house hold.

Hindu dharma insists on monogamy because it wants holistic development of an individual with body, mind and intellect. When we look into the psychological aspects of human beings, man needs to travel the journey of life amidst the tides of good and bad and happy and sorrow. The stage of melancholy needs warm and soothing words and the state of ebullience needs companion to share. In both the stages, the bond of marriage supports each other. It avoids radical thinking and will not give any room for depressions. Stable and satisfied married life results in peaceful social life. It is the apt time to throw light on steady study of the great epic “Ramayana” which conveys interminable values one need to know and follow although it is as old as hills and as constant as sun. R.K.Narayan pictures Krishna as the descendent of Lord Rama who was righteous and loyal to his wife in the novel “The English Teacher”. They are life mates as well as soul mates like Lord Rama and Sita.

“Our life is one of thought and experience. Thought is something which has solidity and power and as in all existence ours is also a life of aspiration, striving and joy.”⁶

Love and lust must be satisfied to avoid anomalies or chaos in society. The ceremony of marriage sublimates both and gives socially acceptable position and dignity to wife and husband. R.K.Narayan pictures them as role models to the society. Their intimacy, understanding, acquaintance and interdependence are admirable. Krishna and Susila respects each other and they are true lovers in sharing their views and feelings and also with mutual recognition to their concerns. Love replaces ego, sacrifice replaces selfishness and patience replaces power. This is the beauty and greatness of Indian culture which has been depicted by R.K.Narayan through his characters.

“By the time we were coming out of the variety Hall that night we were in such agreement and showed such tender concern for each other’s views and feelings that we both wondered how we could have treated each other so carefully”⁷

Krishna’s heart sinks at the misfortune of Susila’s death. This separation makes him pale. Her memories buzz around him and her voice echoes in his ear. He desperately cries for her. He shuts his eyes and visualizes the form of his wife. With the suggestion that her soul is with him, he decides to spend the rest of his life with the soul of Susila. Krishna has followed the footsteps of Lord Rama and remains as monogamist. The flavor of Indian Culture has been pictured so artistically and naturally in this novel. The supremacy and interconnectedness of two souls of wife and husband is honourable. This is the accomplishment of Indian soil which has set high goals for the bond of marriage. This elevated state of pleasure is equated to seventh heaven.

Mr. Sampath (The Printer of Malgudi)

If we look back the other side of the shield, the recent research study states that 15% of women in Tamil Nadu are leading their lives alone away from their spouses and more number of divorce cases is filing in courts. Financial independence, adaptation of western culture and selfish thinking are becoming barriers to happy and homely atmosphere in the society. Western influenced younger generation of India considers ceremony of marriage is only to a social approval for having sex. But they are not grasping the theology of progeny and social harmony. At times human temptations, diversions, artificial attractions and temporary urges astray people. R.K.Narayan pictures mirror images of filthy human tendencies in this novel. Sampath’s covetousness and infatuation fancy him towards shanty who is said to be distant relative of Sampath. She plays role of Parvati in their banner “Burning of Kama”. Sampath feels that the duty of a husband is to facilitate luxurious life and provide monetary benefits. Through the character sketch of Sampath R.K.Narayan has reflected narrow minded and male dominating Indian society. Male has mistreated dignity and priority given to him. His exposure seeks for lust.

“Some people say that every sane man needs two wives—a perfect one for the house and a perfect one outside for social life....I have one. Why not the other? I have confidence that I will keep both of them happy and if necessary in separate houses. Is a man’s heart so narrow that it cannot accommodate more than one? I have married according to Vedic rites let me have one according to the civil marriage law...”⁸

Vulnerability of human tendency is defusing the commitments and responsibilities. Sampath and Santi both are disloyal to their spouses. R.K.Narayan wants to project petty mindedness of people apart from male and female disparities. Hindu dharma has imposed indomitable ethical values on both the genders. Trifling tendencies may spread like wild fire

and influence a few more persons in the society. To forbid trifling misinterpretations, simultaneously R.K.Narayan has also sketches the character of Srinivas who is an anthropologist and ingenious. Srinivas is in the constant vigilance of inexpiable behaviors of Sampath and Santhi. Indian Law, Hindu dharma and Indian epic emphasis on monogamy because it is an eternal interweaving of heart and soul of a wife and a husband. So Srinivas advises, counsels and insists Sampath to be allegiant to his wife. But Srinivas words falls in the deaf ears of Sampath. Sudden disappearance of Sampath and Santhi creates ambiguity in the society. Within a few days disgusting company of santi makes him to regret for his attempt. Then he recollects the words of Srinivas. The magnetic power of Indian Culture do not let people fall into the pit of unethical world. It is like an umbrella which pulls people under it. After a few days Sampath returns and declares that still he is a monogamist. East or West let all prostrate to the ethical aroma of Indian Culture and it ever charming marital bliss.

“Sampath leaned over and whispered; I’m still a monogamist. Don’t worry

“Ah that’s very good?”

“Things have happened as you wished.”⁹

CONCLUSIONS

An incident from Adi Sankara’s autobiography is relevant to conclude this paper. Once Adi Sankara debates and defeats Mandanamitra. But Mandanamitra’s wife Ubhayabharati challenges and asks him to defeat her in “Kamasutra” to accept his complete victory. As he is a Sanyasi he asks recess for 15 days. He instructs his disciples to take care of his physical frame of the body. Through yogic power called “Parakaya pravesam” he exits his body and enters into the body of king who was laying dead. There he learns the art of beauty and significance of love and lust. But one of the wives of king smells the soul and traces the body of Sankara to cremate. Her efforts become futile. Then Sankara rises alive and he defeats Ubhayabharati. This an eye opener to the readers to apprehend the noble cause of sex and its divinity and solidarity. The need of the hour is to know the significance of marriage vows:

It is not slavery but it is servile.

It is not a condition but it is correlation.

It is not a passion but it is perception.

This mellifluous intimacy is a heart blowing perceptive insight. Love is law and Lust is nature. The privilege of marital happiness is like a bowl of honey. Everyone must enjoy it.

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